

# Training Translators and Interpreters for a Digitised and Globalised World : Wikipedia, Lingua Francas and Critical Thinking

Määttä, Simo K.

Peter Lang

2019

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## Training Translators and Interpreters for a Digitised and Globalised World: Wikipedia, *Lingua Francas*, and Critical Thinking

### Abstract

This chapter describes two methods aimed at fostering transferable, 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills, more specifically critical-thinking skills, in translation and interpreting training. First, the study involved students of an introductory course in professional translation who translated a section of a Wikipedia article from French into Finnish for a project that they managed and self-assessed. The project included not only translation, but also editing, proofreading, localising, synthetic translation, and coding. One of the goals of this project was to expose students to the responsibilities of the academic community in the production of impartial information and knowledge. Second, the study involved students of an introductory course in legal translation who were exposed to the linguistic, cultural, and administrative variation within the francophone world through the production of different texts related to adoption and a lecture in which a complex network of intertextual chains in the domain of family law was analysed. A central goal of this translation course was to prepare translation students for legal and community interpreting by emphasising the connections between translation and interpreting in *lingua franca* contexts. The development of critical-thinking skills was the main goal of both courses. The paper argues that fostering transferable, general working-life skills such as critical thinking should form the basis for preparing employable translation and interpreting students for a precarious job market.

Key words: translator training, interpreter training, critical thinking, *skopos*, context, intertextuality, employability.

### 1. Introduction

This chapter is based on my experience as a translator, legal and community interpreter, lecturer on Translation and Interpreting (T&I) Studies, and sociolinguist. It analyses the challenges and opportunities related to new communication technologies and the challenges posed by *lingua francas* in T&I training. The paper argues that the precarious T&I job market largely resulting from diverse phenomena related to digitisation and globalisation calls for a greater degree of interaction between T&I and enhanced convergence between education in liberal arts and T&I training. Concrete examples from T&I training will be used to illustrate this goal. Firstly, I will explain the ways in which the translation of Wikipedia articles in a professional translation class can develop translating and transferable working-life skills, while at the same time producing valuable sources and parallel texts for both translators and interpreters. Secondly, I will discuss a series of pedagogical solutions adopted in a legal translation class in order to prepare students for both T&I in *lingua franca* settings, which are common, for example, in language pairs including French or English. In this case, one of the goals is thus to expose students to a working life characterised by accrued intralinguistic

variation and complex language-contact constellations. Ultimately, both activities described in the paper foster the main transferable skills that university education can offer, i.e. critical-thinking skills or the ability to consider phenomena, facts, persons, and their doings from as many perspectives as possible. Critical-thinking skills form the basis not only for academic careers but also for all careers in which problem-solving, evaluation, and life-long-learning skills are needed. In fact, critical thinking is needed in all working-life situations.

## 2. Translating Wikipedia

### 2.1. Rationale: transferable working-life skills in the era of digitalised information-production

New communication technologies have revolutionised the Source texts and  
finished translations can be sent by email in a fraction of a second. Most dictionaries,  
background information, and parallel texts can be consulted electronically in office  
without having to go to the library.



































